

Exhibit No. 3Date 3/11/2015Bill No. HB 200

Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee:

My name is Judy Tankink.

According to an article dated Feb 19, 2015 in the National Conference of State Legislatures, currently there are twelve states that have passed legislation regarding drug testing or screening for public assistance applicants or recipients (Alabama, Arizona, Florida, Georgia, Kansas, Michigan, Mississippi, Missouri, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Tennessee and Utah.) Some apply to all applicants; others include specific language that there is a reason to believe the person is engaging in illegal drug activity or has a substance use disorder; others require a specific screening process.

This is nothing new. Substance abuse issues have long been part of public assistance policy discussions. States have proposed drug testing of applicants and recipients of public welfare benefits since federal welfare reform in 1996. The federal rules permit drug testing as part of the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families block grant. In recent years, nearly all states have proposed some form of drug testing or screening for applicants. In fact, the 1996 welfare law bars states from providing TANF assistance to persons convicted of a felony for possession, use, or distribution of illegal drugs.

My understanding of HB200 is not based on the assumption that a large population of welfare applicants use drugs; but that we can help those that are challenged with this problem. The question I have is, "why wouldn't we want to help these people?"

This bill will identify those with drug issues early on in the process while still providing benefits to their dependents and ensuring that the benefits are being used appropriately.

Look at Section 53-4-244 Payments to person interested in child's welfare in lieu of special guardianship;

In lieu of guardianship proceedings, payments may be made in behalf of the child or children to another person found by the local office of public assistance to be interested in or concerned with the welfare of the needy child or children in accordance with the rules established by the department. (2) (a) When an adult applying for financial assistance under this part is determined to be ineligible because of failure to comply with the requirements of [section 2], the determination may not affect cash benefits for which a dependent child or dependent children of the family are still eligible. A third party may receive and administer the benefits on behalf of the eligible child or children.

This bill clearly states that children in need of benefits will get those benefits! It also ensures that those with substance abuse will get the help they need.

I urge you to support HB200 sponsored by Rep. Randall Pinocci.

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